

REMARKS

Claims 1-43 were pending in the application at the time of the Office Action. The Office Action set forth a restriction requirement requiring applicant to elect one of the following groups of claims for prosecution on the merits:

Group I: Claims 1-12;
Group II: Claims 13-20;
Group III: Claims 21-33; and
Group IV: Claims 34-43.

Applicant hereby elects without traverse Group II containing claims 13-20 for prosecution on the merits. Applicant has herein cancelled non-elected claims 1-12 and 21-43 and has added new claims 44-54 which depend either directly or indirectly from claim 13. Applicant respectfully submits that new claims 44-54 are supported by the application as originally filed and entry thereof is respectfully requested.

The Office Action also sets forth two species elections identified under the below Categories A and B:

Category A

Species I, Figure 1;
Species II, Figure 6;
Species III, Figure 9;
Species IV, Figure 10.

Category B

Species I, Figure 2;
Species II, Figure 3;
Species III, Figure 4;
Species IV, Figure 5.

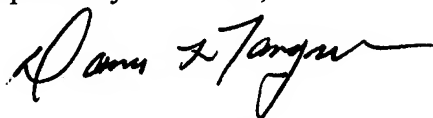
Initially, applicant traverses the species election under Category A to the extent that Figures 1, 6, and 9 depict the same species only at different views and at different stages of development. As such, applicant should not be required to elect between Figures 1, 6, and 9. However, to satisfy the mandatory election, applicant hereby elects Species III, Figure 9 for the Category A election. Regarding the Category B election, applicant elects Species I, Figure 2 without traverse.

Finally, applicant respectfully submits that all of pending claims 13-20 and 44-54 read on the elected species. No other requirements are set forth in the Office Action.

In view of the foregoing, applicant respectfully requests the Examiner's reconsideration and allowance of claims 13-20 and 44-54 as now pending in the present application. Should the Examiner find any impediment to allowance of the claims which could be clarified in a telephonic interview, the Examiner is respectfully requested to initiate such an interview with the undersigned.

Dated this 23rd day of December 2004.

Respectfully submitted,



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